

national briefs

CALIFORNIA

Richard Lamm, former governor of Colorado, announced last month that he will seek the Reform Party nomination for President of the United States. Ross Perot, founder of the Reform Party, has also announced his intention to seek the nomination. The Reform Party's National Convention will be held in Long Beach, CA., on Aug. 11. More than one million party members are expected to cast their votes via mail, computer and telephone. The nominee will be announced on Aug. 18.

In a conversation with openly gay Reform Party Secretary Jim Mangia, Lamm said he was "wholeheartedly committed" to the inclusion of lesbians and gay men in his campaign and in the Reform Party. Lamm, who has stated his support for national domestic partners legislation, denounced the Defense of Marriage Act, calling it "deliberately inflammatory and an example of political party pandering."



The Los Angeles police officer whose lawsuit against the Los Angeles Police Department led to a 1993 settlement designed to end discrimination and harassment against gays and lesbians within the LAPD, was pleased to receive a 66 day suspension from the LAPD Board of Rights last month. He had faced possible dismissal.

Mitchell Grobeson had been suspended without pay since June 1995, charged with wearing his uniform without permission to a gay pride festival and an AIDS benefit walk, and with recruiting fellow lesbians and gay men to the LAPD through a magazine ad that was not sanctioned by the department, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.



Dignity Partners, Inc., a San Francisco company that buys life insurance policies from the terminally ill at a discount, announced last month that it intends to stop purchasing policies from people with AIDS because recently announced progress in treating AIDS could make such purchases unprofitable.

The company was formed in 1993. Its purchases provide the terminally ill with immediate cash in exchange for the company's collecting on the policies at the policy-holder's death. The amount a person receives for selling his/her policy depends, in part, on how long the person is expected to live. The less time a person is expected to survive, the more money he or she is paid for the policy. Dignity was the first company to specialize in these sales, known as viatical settlements. More than 95 percent of its business involved purchasing policies from people with AIDS.



After a 10-year struggle, San Francisco gay and lesbian activists have finally succeeded in



Harvey Milk

having one of the City's public schools named in honor of Harvey Milk, the San Francisco Supervisor assassinated in 1978 by former Supervisor Dan White. Mayor George Moscone was killed at the same time by White.

The San Francisco School Board voted unanimously to change the name of Douglass Alternative Elementary School to the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy according to an Associated Press story. The school's curriculum will be expanded to include civil rights issues and tolerance training.

CYBERSPACE

Over the Rainbow, a new on-line travel service exclusively for lesbian and gay travelers, debuts on America Online this September. Rémy Publishing Company, publisher of Passport Newsletter and creator of AOL's Passport Newsletter Online, will produce the new cyberspace newsletter.

Over the Rainbow will provide continuously updated information on locating lesbian and gay-friendly neighborhoods, establishments, attractions and activities. It will feature stories and news briefs on places of special interest to gay and lesbian travelers, ranging from such established destinations as Key West and Amsterdam to more exotic and off-the-beaten-path locations.

The e-mail address for Over the Rainbow is DLM629@aol.com.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Early last month Martin Ornelas-Quintero was appointed the new executive director of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization. He has served as LLEGO's acting executive director for the past few months. A native of Tijuana, Mexico, Ornelas-Quintero first joined the staff of LLEGO in 1993 as the director of the AIDS Program.

This October the nine-year-old organization will host its fourth annual conference, Sembrando la Semilla: Planting the Seed, in Washington, DC.

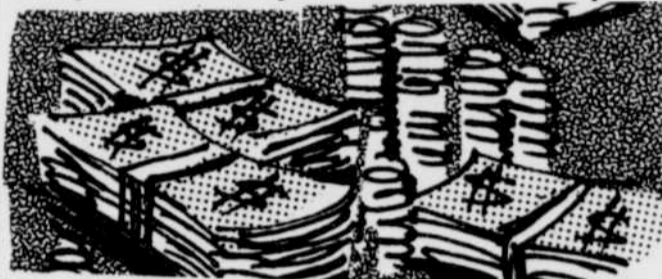
ILLINOIS

The International Gay and Lesbian Franchise Association will present information on gay-friendly franchise companies to gays and lesbians interested in franchising. The presentation will feature more than ten franchisers who have signed declarations of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation. The event will take place on Sept. 14, at Chicago's Franchising and Licensing World Center.

People interested in the event or in information on gay-friendly franchise opportunities can contact the association at GAYFRANCH@aol.com or by phoning 602-949-7848.

MINNESOTA

Gay and lesbian couples can now benefit from new financial products and services aimed directly at domestic partners. American Express



Financial Advisors, a financial planning firm owned by American Express, recently began offering Rights of Accumulation benefits, which are reduced sales charges on mutual funds after accumulated investments total \$50,000 or more, to AEFA clients who are domestic partners. This change applies to both same-sex and heterosexual domestic partners.

Previously, the reduction or waiver of sales charges was available only to the spouses or unmarried children under age 21 of AEFA clients.

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Mobilization '96, an organization working to ensure the defeat of North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms this November, is sponsoring a series of fundraising events around the country. Individuals and groups from around the United States are asked to host a houseparty with the theme "A Going Away Party for Jesse Helms."

Helms, a well-known homophobe, is opposed in this year's election by progressive Democrat Harvey Gantt. Money raised by the houseparties will be used to fund efforts to defeat Helms.

NC Mobe '96 is an independent committee focusing on anti-Helms efforts in the gay, lesbian,



bisexual, transgendered and allied communities. In addition to the houseparties, NC Mobe '96 is working to increase voter registration in its targeted groups and is recruiting volunteers to actively campaign against Helms.

Individuals and groups interested in hosting a houseparty are urged to immediately contact NC Mobe '96 at 919-828-3311, fax 919-828-0032 or e-mail Ncmobe96@aol.com.

NEW MEXICO

At a General Assembly meeting held last month, commissioners of the governing body of the Presbyterian Church voted to ban the ordination of practicing gays and lesbians. The amendment to the Book of Order bars sexually active lesbians and gay men from ordination. The Commissioners also ordered that unmarried heterosexual clergy should likewise remain celibate. They did, however, vote to support the civil rights of same-sex partners.

Although homosexual orientation is not considered a sin, homosexual practice was described in the amendment as a sin comparable to adultery, greed, lust, fornication, pride, jealousy and malice.

The amendment will now be sent to local church leaders for approval. If a majority approve the amendment, it becomes official church law.

NEW YORK

Noted architect Philip Johnson celebrated his 90th birthday last month by unveiling the model of his design for the Dallas, Texas branch of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Johnson, who is gay, also designed the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif.

The Dallas congregation attracts thousands of worshippers every week to its 900-seat building. The new cathedral will seat 2,500. It is estimated to cost \$20 million. Although the money for construction has not yet been raised, Rev. Michael Piazza, the cathedral's senior minister, is hopeful construction can begin by the year 2000 and be completed within two years. He envisions funding coming from several sources, including the congregation, gays throughout the world and other members of the Dallas community.



The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation announced early last month that it had received a \$1 million donation from New York finance executive Michael Palm. Palm's gift is thought to be the largest single contribution by an individual to a national lesbian and gay organization.

GLAAD will use the money to build media resource centers throughout the country, helping to finance the conversion of GLAAD's existing chapters into grassroots training centers and media access points for individuals and organizations serving the gay and lesbian community.

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